

SEN. BOB MCCASLIN

CAPITOL TIDBITS

January 26, 2006

In the second week of the Legislative session, we moved quickly on several bills involving public safety, including a bill I introduced to extend the statute of limitations on sex offenders. That bill passed the Senate floor unanimously. Below is more information on my bill and others. Also, please take note of a recent consumer alert which I have included at the end of this column.

Senate approves extension of time limit for filing charges against someone for a sex offense

There is a time period established in law during which someone can be charged with a crime. However, DNA evidence has made it possible to conclusively identify an offender in cases where not enough evidence to convict existed before the DNA was obtained. Under the bill I introduced, **Senate Bill 5042**, if DNA evidence becomes available from a new crime that can identify a perpetrator of a felony sex offense committed at an earlier date, this evidence re-opens the time limit for one year in order to file charges. The Senate passed the bill by a unanimous vote on January 18.

Bill exempts people in trusted positions from using the Sex Offender Alternative Sentencing Act (SSOSA) to avoid prison time

Under **Senate Bill 6669**, now being considered by the Senate Committee on Judiciary, no member of the clergy, school employee, counselor, elected official or officer of the court may apply for a deferred sentence and community-based treatment if he or she molests a child with whom there is a trusted relationship or when the child victim possesses knowledge of the offender's position of authority. Stopping the abuse of SSOSA is key to protecting our children.

Operation: Allied Against Meth" bill presented to Legislature

After the 2005 session ended, a bi-partisan group of legislators joined law enforcement leaders, prosecutors, social service professionals and members of the business community to form a methamphetamine task force lead by Attorney General Rob McKenna. This task force took a comprehensive look at the statewide epidemic of illegal production and abuse of methamphetamine. Meth is a long-lasting central nervous system stimulant and extremely addictive. The makeshift and often mobile labs set up to make meth are highly volatile and dangerous. The task force has recommended several changes to law which are embodied in **Senate Bill 6239**. The recommendations include additional funding to

help local governments fight the meth epidemic, tools for effective meth lab cleanup and more effective treatment, public education and criminal penalties.

CONSUMER ALERT: Washington Attorney General Rob McKenna has issued a consumer alert to warn citizens about a telephone scam in which the caller claims to work for the Department of Health. The caller says the agency is offering some sort of incentive, such as a discount card for health services, a voucher good for prescriptions, or a \$1,000 shopping spree. The caller then asks for the person's bank account information or gives bogus bank account information and asks the person to verify. Similar calls have been reported in Colorado, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia. The calls in all states are likely coming from one operation. Consumers that believe they have been a victim of fraud should immediately contact their bank. For more information about what to do if you become a victim of identity theft, contact the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-438-4338 or the Washington state Attorney General McKenna's office at 1-800-551-4636.

As always, feel free to contact me with your thoughts on these or any other issue.

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